

DMAP Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 1

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

July 2003



*Drawing By Donald "Duck" Locascio, Jr.
Region 4 Wildlife Forester*

INTRODUCTION

The 2002 DMAP newsletters were limited to a few brief mail-outs providing cooperators with facts and status reports concerning Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) due to the intensive LDWF activities surrounding this insidious disease threat. This is the first full issue of the DMAP Newsletter since fall 2001.

Deer biologists and deer hunters nationwide are extremely concerned about CWD due to the uncertainty surrounding this mysterious disease. One of our first priorities was to start testing to determine if CWD could be found in Louisiana. The original sampling goal of 500 hunter-killed deer was doubled to 1,000 samples before Thanksgiving week, typically the most productive week of deer season.

As with other research projects in the past, DMAP cooperators “stepped up to the plate” to fully support our efforts. DMAP cooperators from around the state collected, refrigerated and in many cases transported samples for LDWF. **The first year of Louisiana’s CWD surveillance program was successful in large part due to volunteer help provided by DMAP Cooperators.**

2002 CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE REPORT

By Larry Savage, DMAP Coordinator

Great news!!!! Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was not detected in any of the 1,258 deer tissue samples submitted by LDWF to USDA laboratories in 2002. This is an excellent start for Louisiana’s CWD surveillance program. However, we must “keep our feet on the ground”. Because CWD was not detected **does not guarantee its absence in the state.** Two states, Wisconsin and Illinois, tested 3 to 5 years before discovering this dreadful disease.

CWD burst onto the national deer-hunting scene in 2002 when Wisconsin became the first state east of the Mississippi River to confirm a CWD outbreak. Human health concerns surrounding a totally

different disease, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or “Mad Cow”, had already heightened public awareness of this family of brain disorders (prion diseases). Together these factors quickly thrust CWD onto the nationwide “front burner”.

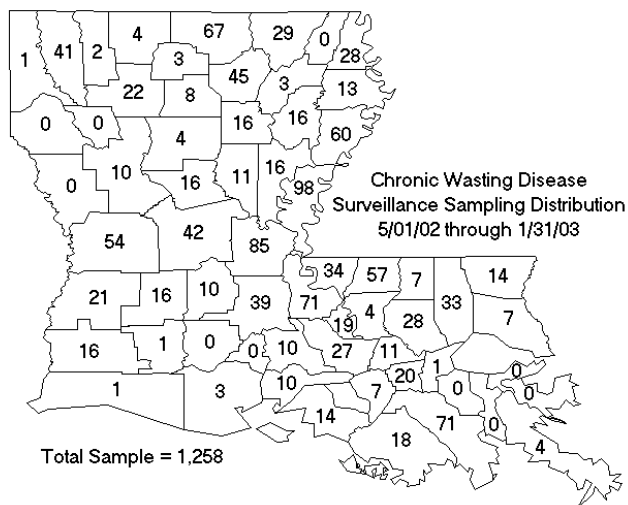
The startling discovery of CWD immediately changed deer hunting and deer management in Wisconsin. Wisconsin DNR will spend \$26 million over the next three years in an effort to manage this mysterious disease. Hunting license sales dropped 10% in 2002-2003. The resulting cultural, economic and ecological impacts are immeasurable.

Within weeks of the Wisconsin news, LDWF took immediate action to protect against the potential CWD threat by implementing a two-part management plan:

1. **Regulations to Prevent CWD from Entering Louisiana.** Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that at least some CWD outbreaks in wild deer and elk have originated from pen-raised animals. Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission passed regulations to stop the transportation of farm-raised deer and elk into or through the state. Also, a moratorium was placed on new Game Breeder deer pens (zoos, nature parks and pet deer pens) and reporting of deer deaths in these pens became mandatory.

Preventing CWD from entering Louisiana (if it has not already done so) is the only proven management practice available at this time. The old adage “one ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” has never been so appropriate.
2. **A Multi-year Testing Program to Determine the Presence or Absence of CWD in Louisiana.** LDWF has set an annual testing goal of 1,000 wild and captive deer for the next 5 years. All other southeastern states have implemented similar surveillance plans.

At this time, there is no practical live animal test for CWD. Removal of brain and lymph gland tissue from inside a deer's skull is the only method available. Deer harvested during the 2002-2003 hunting season were the primary source of statewide CWD samples. Additional samples were taken from sick deer, captive deer in illegal pens, road kills, and deer collected by LDWF for various research projects.



The time and expense involved in collecting, shipping, and testing of these samples has been significant. LDWF's proposed budget for the first year of CWD management/surveillance exceeded \$150,000.



LDWF Biologists Training for CWD Testing at LSU School of Veterinary Medicine

Hard working DMAP volunteers significantly reduced 2002 surveillance cost. Thanks to their help, LDWF exceeded its sampling goal with a

total of 1,258 samples. The excellent statewide distribution of samples collected was just as important as the total number. The odds for discovering CWD were significantly improved by volunteers submitting samples from every corner of the state. **This important aspect of the surveillance program was impossible to achieve without help.**

Call your local DMAP biologist if your DMAP unit would like to submit samples for CWD testing in 2003. Some parts of the state have a higher priority for sampling. You may be selected for 2003 or put on a schedule for the following hunting season. Those selected will receive written instructions and sample collecting supplies.



Biologist Reggie Wycoff Collecting Brainstem for CWD Testing – Red River Wildlife Management Area

Additional steps you can take to assist LDWF with CWD risk management:

1. Aggressively support LDWF's science-based

deer management recommendations and regulations.

2. Report violations of the captive deer/elk import ban (Operation Game Thief).
3. Report sick wild deer to your local LDWF office.
4. Properly manage your deer herd by harvesting the recommended number of females. Disease spreads very fast in an over-populated unhealthy deer herd.
5. Educate your group of hunters about CWD risks: www.wlf.state.la.us (Wildlife Division-Deer Program-CWD), www.aphis.usda.gov & www.cwd-info.org

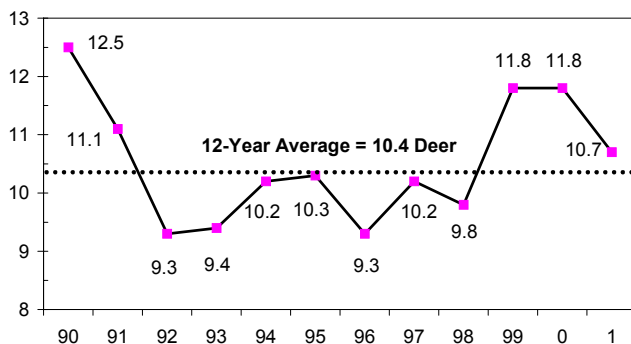
“OLD NEWS”

DMAP Harvest Summary 2001-2002

By Larry Savage, DMAP Coordinator

DMAP cooperators reported killing 28,405 deer on 2,631,696 acres during the 2001-02 hunting season. This represents a harvest of 10.7 deer for every 1000 acres enrolled in DMAP (1 deer/93 acres). The statewide DMAP deer harvest per 1000 acres has been above the program 12-year average (10.4 deer/1000 acres or one deer/96 acres) for the last three hunting seasons.

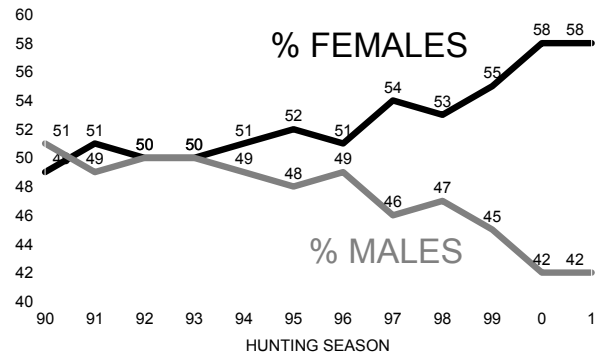
Deer Harvest Per 1000 Acres



Increased female harvest has driven the overall increase in total harvest. Harvest sex ratio (% males and females) on DMAP lands has changed significantly over the past 12 years. From 1990 to 1994 sex ratios were about even with one female being killed for each male. Gradually the

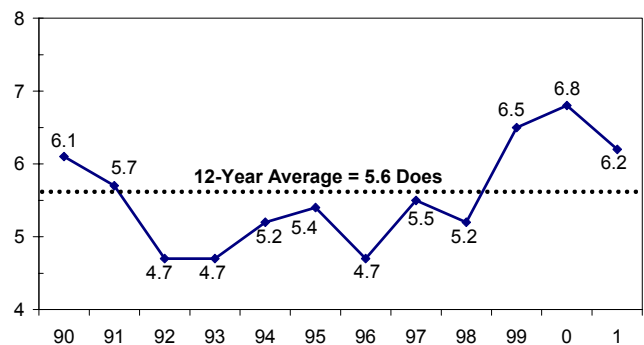
proportion of females has increased to 58% of the harvest in 2000 and in 2001.

DMAP HARVEST SEX RATIO 1990 - 01



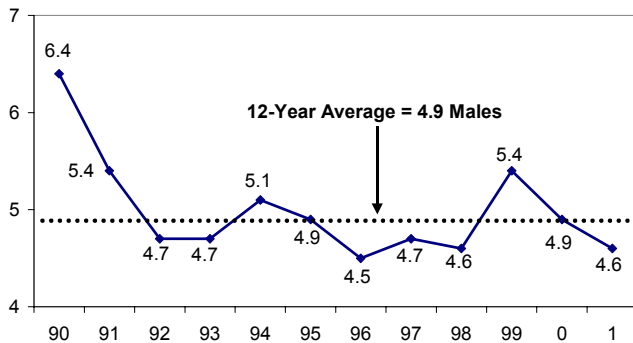
The increased percentage of females in the harvest represents a real increase in the rate (deer harvest per acre) does are being removed from the land. On a statewide basis, females have been harvested at above the program 12-year average (6.2 females/1000 acres or 1 female/180 acres) for the last three years.

Doe Harvest Per 1000 Acres



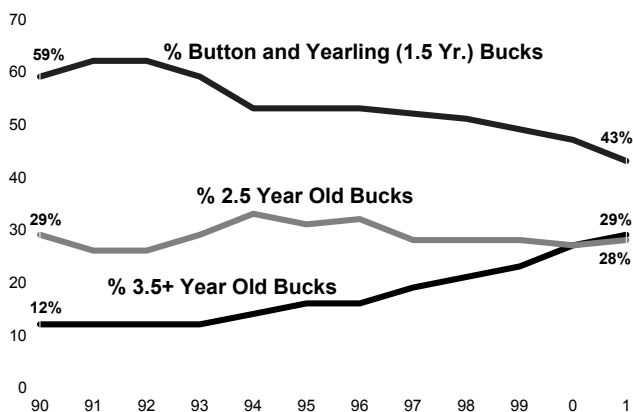
During the past decade, male harvest per acre on DMAP lands was stable. In 2001-02, 4.6 males per 1000 acres (1 buck/ 219 acres) were harvested.

Male Harvest Per 1000 Acres



The shift to a higher harvest of females per acre along with the stable but *more selective* buck kill (see age structure graphic) demonstrates the ability of landowners and clubs to use **voluntary restrictions** to improve the quality of bucks on their lands. In order to have a successful long-term quality buck management program, **adequate female harvest is a must**. Based on DMAP harvest data, it is readily apparent that most of our cooperators fully understand this critical concept. *The voluntary approach provides more flexibility than a statewide mandatory antler restrictions (point restrictions).*

Age Structure of Male Harvest



Clubs/landowners that focus single-mindedly on antler restrictions (save spikes) or other management practices (food plots/supplemental feeding) and ignore the importance of controlled female harvest are doomed to mediocrity at best and more likely total failure.



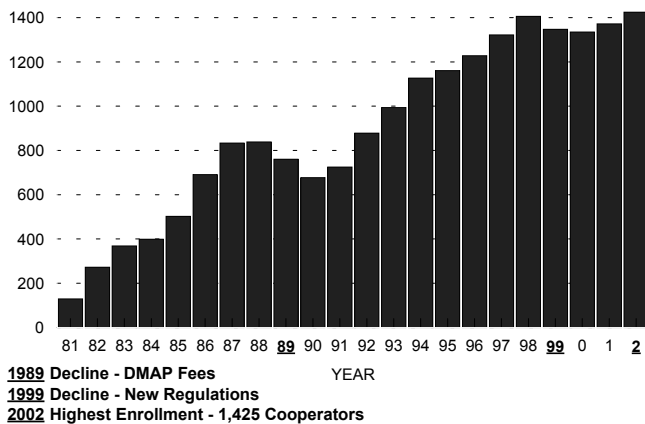
Francis Vehonsky's 1st Deer -- Gill Farm DMAP, Lincoln Parish (2001-02)



Nick Vidrine's 1st Buck – Upper Woods DMAP, Pointe Coupee Parish (2001-02)

DMAP ENROLLMENT 2002

DMAP ENROLLMENT 1981 - 02



Enrollment in DMAP reached an all-time high at 1,425 cooperators in 2002. Since its inception DMAP has been very popular with Louisiana deer hunters as it has in other southeastern states. Only two temporary declines in enrollment have occurred: when DMAP fees were instituted in 1989 and when DMAP regulations were revised in 1999. Increased parish either-sex seasons in Area 2 appeared to result in an enrollment decline in the northwest Louisiana piney woods, but a corresponding increase in enrollment has recently occurred in bottomland areas of the state.

****IMPORTANT NOTICE****

DMAP INVOICES

Invoices for annual DMAP fees are being mailed starting July 1, 2003. With a few exceptions, the new invoicing process worked well last year. Local Wildlife Offices will no longer accept DMAP payments. Fees must be mailed directly to the LDWF Fiscal Section in Baton Rouge. **Enrollment in DMAP will not be official for your club until LDWF Fiscal Section receives and records your fee payment!!**

DMAP APPLICATION

DMAP applications for the 2003-2004 deer season are due now!!! A current map of your DMAP unit must accompany applications. You cannot be invoiced for 2003 until your local

Regional Wildlife Office receives a new application. **The Application deadline is September 1st!!**

Deer Research and Biology

Record EHD Outbreak in LA

By: David Moreland, Deer Program Manager

On August 27, 2002 I received a call from the Region 6 Wildlife Office regarding a sick deer on a club in Iberville Parish. Club members had been doing some pre-season work and found the deer. They caught the animal and kept it in a small shed. I drove over, picked the deer up, and brought it to the LSU Vet School for examination. The deer was euthanized and a necropsy (examination) performed. The final diagnosis was Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) or Bluetongue virus. After this, calls continued to come in throughout the entire season from hunters who either found sick or dead deer or from hunters who had harvested a deer that appeared to be sick.

EHD is a viral disease of white-tailed deer. It is commonly referred to as bluetongue. In 2002 there was a major outbreak of hemorrhagic disease in the southeast US that went as far north as Pennsylvania. The earliest virus isolation for this outbreak came from a deer in Virginia on August 14. The outbreak in Louisiana was concentrated in the southeast parishes and in the Atchafalaya Basin.

The Southeast Cooperative Disease Study Unit located at the University of Georgia is the primary wildlife disease unit utilized by the southeast game agencies for wildlife disease testing. Wildlife Division biologists put forth a major effort to collect tissue samples from sick or dead deer and submitted them to SCWDS for testing. The lab was able to isolate the EHD-2 virus strain in over half of them. This sero-type was the primary one isolated from the tissue samples submitted from other states.

The clinical signs associated with an EHD

infection can vary. Some deer may show few of the many clinical signs and die within 24 hours. Clinical signs include fever, depression, respiratory distress, and swelling of the head, neck, or tongue. As the disease continues in an animal it may exhibit lameness, ineptness, and reduced activity. If the animal does not die it may be disabled for weeks or months by lameness and emaciation.

A deer sick with EHD is subject to other secondary infections. Environmental stress factors will also create problems for deer during an outbreak. The outbreak in southeast Louisiana came at a time when two successive storms flooded swamp habitat and isolated deer on limited ridge habitat. Areas where deer numbers are high generally have over-browsed habitat and this creates problems for sick deer. Deer that are in poor physical condition at the time of an outbreak probably will not be able to survive if they become sick.

Transmission of the virus occurs through biting midges (small flies). The disease generally occurs in late summer or early fall; the timing of the disease is related to the occurrence of these flies. A confirmed diagnosis of the virus requires isolation of the virus from fresh tissue samples taken from the lung, spleen, or lymph nodes. The virus is killed as a dead deer decomposes and isolations are difficult to achieve from animals that have been dead for several hours.

Losses from an EHD outbreak can range from 10-30 percent of the population. The outbreak in the Basin was intense. Blood testing of animals prior to 2002 showed a low percentage of the deer testing positive for the virus. This would mean that most of the herd would have no immunity to EHD and would be subject to exposure. As previously mentioned, hunters encountered lame or emaciated animals throughout the entire season. This outbreak could very well be responsible for the low level of deer activity reported by many hunters this past season.

EHD is the most important disease of deer in the southeast. The disease occurs annually, but the

severity of it can vary. There is no treatment for wild herds. Harvest management practices that keep the population numbers below the carrying capacity of the habitat should help reduce losses when an outbreak does occur. Managing the habitat to create good browse conditions for deer will provide the needed forage necessary to keep animals in good physical condition. There are no human health implications involved with EHD, although animals that are severely emaciated or exhibit secondary type infections may not be suitable for the dinner table.



Common EHD Symptom – Sloughing Hooves

People

New Entries Louisiana Big Game Recognition Program—2002-03

By David Moreland, Deer Program Manager



Recognition Class Deer from Avoyelles Parish

Score	Location	Hunter	Weapon
174 6/8-T	Avoyelles	Allen Gaspard	Gun
171 7/8-. T	W. Feliciana	James A. Jackson	Gun
171 3/8-NT	W. Feliciana	Mike Sutton	Gun
156 5/8-T	Claiborne	Eric Rachal	Gun
153 3/8-T	Avoyelles	Jeramie Bordelon	Gun
147 5/8-T	Avoyelles	Bobby Coco	Gun
146-T	Three Rivers	Adam Smith	Gun
143 4/8-T	Webster	Ronald Price	Gun
141 6/8-T	St. John	George Rochelle	Gun
140 4/8-T	Natchitoches	Steven Scott	Gun
138 5/8-T	Avoyelles	Michael Coco	Gun
137-T	Webster	Rick Thomas	Gun
131 6/8-T	E. Feliciana	Robert Addison	Gun
143 7/8-T	E.Carroll	Randy Steverson	Bow
133 6/8-T	Concordia	Vic Sages	Bow
115 2/8-T	Tensas NWR	Chris Morris	Bow
158 1/8-T	Thistlethwaite	Bruce Cooke	ML
154 4/8-T	Lake Ophelia	Anthony Lemoine	ML
143 4/8-T	C. Beauregard	Dennis Albritton	ML
135 3/8-NT	Vernon	Joseph Dickerson	ML
135 1/8-T	Evangeline	Chris Tate	ML
119 2/8-T	E. Feliciana	David Blouin	ML
116-T	E. Feliciana	Emile LeBlanc	ML

T= Typical Antlers

NT= Non-typical Antlers

“Abandoned” Baby Deer

by: Chris Davis, Region 7 Wildlife Biologist

Every year the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) receives dozens of calls in early summer from concerned citizens who have found “abandoned baby deer”. With the best of intentions, these fawns have been picked up and taken home under the misbelief that they have been orphaned. Most of the time LDWF is expected to pick up the fawn, “rehabilitate” it and then return it to the wild. However, some people can not resist keeping these beautiful animals in backyard pens.

Under no circumstances should a fawn be taken from the wild. It is against the law to pick up baby deer, or any other wild animal, for that matter. By doing so, well-meaning individuals are subject to citation and fine. There are good reasons for these laws. Picking up a fawn seriously reduces the animal’s chance to live a healthy and normal life. In reality, picking up a

fawn condemns it to an early death or life imprisonment in a deer pen.

When a baby deer is born it is weak and awkward. It is unable to move well enough to escape predators. Nature has equipped it with several built in defense mechanisms. The newborn fawn has a coat of light brown hair, liberally covered with white spots. This coloration provides excellent camouflage. With little body odor and by lying motionless the young fawn is much more difficult for predators to find. The mother doe will come by several times a day to feed it. When the young deer gets older and stronger it will be able to keep up with its mother. Until then, its best defense is to lay motionless in a thicket or grassy field.

It is during this vulnerable hiding mode in early summer when people tend to find them. No mother deer is seen and people who are genuinely concerned falsely assume the baby deer has been abandoned. In almost all cases the mother deer is nearby anxiously awaiting the departure of human intruders.

Fawns picked up by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries do not have much of a chance to live a normal life. The baby deer must be hand reared by a Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator at considerable cost of time and expense. Initial mortality is high. Fawns raised on the bottle in a pen situation do not have the opportunity to learn skills and lessons necessary to survive in the wild. They quickly become accustomed to things they must learn to avoid in the wild, such as humans, the family dog and automobiles. If released, these deer would soon succumb to accidents or predation.

In recent research studies in Missouri and Georgia 95% mortality was found in rehabilitated deer released into protected wildlife refuges. Most of these deer perished in the first week. Release of rehabilitated fawns into the wild is truly inhumane and pose a serious disease introduction threat to wild populations. The other alternative would be to confine the deer to a pen and feed them for the rest of their lives. Keeping an ever expanding deer

population in a pen is a very expensive proposition and just not practical.

Citizens encountering baby deer in the wild should leave them untouched and quietly depart the area. If a dog is chasing them, pen up the dog. This will give the baby deer its only real chance to live a normal life. Enforcement Agents with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries are serious about prosecuting people who illegally remove fawns from the wild. Do yourself and the animal a favor, **leave it alone.**



Confiscated fawn—unwittingly removed from the wild

Biologists Attend Chemical Immobilization of Animals Class

By Chris Davis, Region 7 Wildlife Biologist

On March 8 & 9, 2003, 13 biologists with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) attended a Chemical Immobilization of Animals class in Shreveport. **The enrollment fees were paid by the Bayou State Bowhunters Association (BSBA).**

Department biologists frequently receive calls, usually after hours, weekends or holidays, requesting assistance with injured deer. An injured or wild deer is difficult to put hands on. Biologists are also concerned with the serious threat of Chronic Waste Disease (CWD) coming in from out-of-state (see CWD Report, Page 2). CWD has the potential to devastate recreational deer hunting

in the State of Louisiana. A very real source of the disease introduction could be importation of sick animals to deer pens. With a 2-year incubation period, we could have the disease long before symptoms appear. Last year the State prohibited the importation of deer in attempt to control these imported deer. As a result of CWD awareness, the Department has cracked down on illegally obtained deer and illegal deer pens. When they are discovered, biologists are dispatched to confiscate and move them. The ability to immobilize these deer with drugs prior to movement minimizes chances of injury to both the deer and the personnel. Drug use requires strict control and training which was provided by this course.

Department biologists spent 2 days learning to safely use drugs and delivery systems from a top veterinary expert.

The LDWF wishes to express their gratitude to the Bayou State Bowhunters Association. Without the BSBA's generous financial support the Department would have been able to send only 4 or 5 biologists to this course. With this training Department biologists will be able to respond much more efficiently to injured deer complaints, handle deer in illegal pens, and monitor the CWD threat.



Biologist Bill Burns practicing with scoped CO₂ dart gun

*Look for CWD Information under **Wildlife Division, Deer Program** on Our Web Page*

www.wlf.state.la.us



Biologist Chris Davis practices correctly loading darts

South Louisiana Chapter of Q. D. M. A. Donates Portable Deer Weighing Racks

By David Moreland, Deer Program Manager

The South Louisiana Chapter of the Quality Deer Management Association has donated 14 deer weighing racks to LDWF for use in collecting physical data. These portable racks insert into a pick-up truck's trailer hitch and are equipped with a hand winch. They allow deer to be readily processed in remote locations. These racks have been used extensively during statewide deer breeding studies (Areas 2, 4 & 6), CWD surveillance activities, herd health checks, and during managed WMA deer hunts.

"Providing assistance to LDWF's deer management program is one of the objectives of our organization," noted Conrad Dauthier, QDMA chapter president, "This effort was facilitated by a generous donation from Brecheen Pipe and Steel in Brusly LA, who provided the metal pipe used to construct the racks."

Conrad Dauthier spearheaded the project. Members of the South LA Chapter who assisted include Mark Alexander, Mike Medine, Chad Dauthier, Tommy Rozas and Greg Knight.

Some Facts About Louisiana Operation Game Thief (LOGT)

Louisiana Operation Game Thief was formed in 1985 to help the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries stop wildlife poaching in Louisiana. Listed below are some LOGT facts.

- A reward of \$100.00 to \$1,000.00 is paid by LOGT for information leading to the arrest or citation for wildlife violations.
- In 18 years LOGT has paid **\$163,100** for violation reports.
- LOGT has raised **\$267,304** through the generosity of the people of Louisiana, and has **\$102,237.00** in endowments and cash accounts.
- These monies are used to **pay rewards only**. LOGT hopes the endowment funds will one-day finance the operation and we won't have to ask you for donations.
- Articles of Incorporation limit LOGT to 35 members. These members receive no pay and operate on their own nickel (including travel, meals, and even the stamps for our mail). Members meet quarterly at various locations in the state and the members are expected to attend all meetings.
- LOGT is effective and its efforts are appreciated by the LDWF. The Wildlife Agents Association makes a major contribution to LOGT annually.
- More than **1052** arrests have been made from **518** workable LOGT calls.

LOGT is proud of these accomplishments and in need of your help. **Would you please make a contribution and help LOGT help all of us.**

DMA cooperators wishing to make a contribution to LOGT should contact:

Mr. Bill Chapman

P.O. Box 1300

Lake Charles LA. 70601

337-0436-7551

DMA cooperators witnessing a wildlife violation are urged to call LOGT's 24-hr. toll free number @ 800-442-2511.



Confiscated Quality Buck from W. Carroll Parish

A Work of Art, Donald “Duck” Locascio

By Kenny Ribbeck, LDWF Wildlife Forester



Donald “Duck” Locascio is a wildlife biologist in the Wildlife Division’s Forestry Section. Duck started work with the agency in 1997 after obtaining his B.S. in Forestry and M.S. in Wildlife Management from LSU. His work includes managing the forest inventory program on all of the Department owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and the forest management and associated activities on Red River and Three Rivers WMAs.

Duck’s forest management practices on these areas have helped guide the overall habitat and recreational improvements that have been accomplished and continue to be pursued today. His deep appreciation for wildlife populations, especially wild turkey, ducks, deer, squirrel, song birds and fish has led him to seek and accomplish

many projects on these WMAs to improve the long-term sustainability and enjoyment of these resources. **Duck’s appreciation for these resources also shows in his artwork, which has adorned the DMAP newsletter since its inception. His voluntary contributions have made a tremendous addition and attraction to the newsletter stories.**

So, if you are ever in the Shaw, Louisiana area (site of the headquarters for Red/Three Rivers WMAs) stop by and visit with Duck. He will be glad to review upcoming plans for more improvements on these WMAs, or talk about turkey, deer, fishing, birds, etc., but don’t ask about that “honey hole”!

DMAP BIOLOGISTS

SHANNON ANDERSON is a Region 4 Wildlife Biologist. A graduate of Crowville High School, she received a BS in Biology from NLU in 1998 and MS in Biology from ULM in 2001. Her MS thesis dealt with the Reproductive Biology of White-tailed Deer in Northeast Louisiana. White-tailed deer are of major importance in this area of the state and her interest and graduate experience will be beneficial to the Region's DMAP program. Shannon will be directly involved with some 45 clubs, primarily in Caldwell, Catahoula and Franklin Parishes. Also, her primary duties are to manage and direct operations on Boeuf and Sicily Island Hills WMAs. These areas are Department-owned, intensively managed and very popular with the public. She is involved with many other wildlife-related activities within the Region.

JOHN HANKS - A homegrown product from Ouachita Parish, John Hanks cut his teeth hunting ducks, squirrels and deer on Russell Sage and Ouachita WMAs. As a Region 2 biologist, John now supervises the wildlife and habitat management programs on both these Monroe area WMAs. John has a BS degree from the Biology Department at University of Louisiana at Monroe and is currently in the MS program at ULM conducting research on the food habits of mallards

wintering in the greentree reservoir on Russell Sage WMA. John's DMAP responsibilities include approximately 80 clubs/landowners in East Carroll, Ouachita and Morehouse Parishes.

JOHNATHAN BORDELON - Johnathan Bordelon is a wildlife biologist in Region 6 Opelousas. He graduated with a BS in Wildlife Biology from LSU in 1998. Johnathan anchors the north end of Region 6 for the Wildlife Division by working Grassy Lake WMA, Pomme de Terre WMA, and Spring Bayou WMA. Initial DMAP duties include 25 cooperators in Avoyelles Parish.

PATRICK DESHOTELS – Patrick Deshotels completed a BS in Wildlife Management from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 1994. In his nine years with LDWF, Patrick has worked as an alligator technician and Pass-a Loutre WMA biologist with the Refuge Division and since 2001 as a biologist with the Wildlife Division. His primary duties at Region 6 in Opelousas are supervision management activities on Thistlethwaite, Attakapas and Elm Hall WMAs and working with DMAP cooperators on the south end of Region 6. Patrick assists 75 DMAP cooperators in Iberia, St. Mary, Terrebonne and Assumption Parishes in achieving their deer management goals.



Shannon Anderson pulling a brain stem for a Chronic Wasting Disease sample



John Hanks banding ducks in Canada as a LDWF biologist



Patrick (front) and Johnathan (back) at immobilization training school

Non-deer Wildlife

Hunters Can Expect Increasing Bear Activity

By Paul Davidson, Executive Director, Black Bear Conservation Committee

As the efforts to recover the federally listed Louisiana black bear continue, hunters can expect to see more bear activity in parts of the state where bears have not been present in recent decades.

Bears have been sighted regularly in the parishes of Madison, Tensas, Pointe Coupee, St. Mary and Iberia for quite a while. But as bear numbers increase, residents of other parishes can expect to

occasionally see these shy carnivores.

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has been working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to repatriate bears to the lower Ouachita Basin in Arkansas. Female bears with cubs have been relocated to the Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge near the Louisiana border for the past four years. Several of these bears have moved south into Union and Morehouse Parishes.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Louisiana State University and the Black Bear Conservation Committee have been moving female bears with cubs into southern Concordia and eastern Avoyelles Parishes for the past three years. As these bears expand their home ranges, they can be expected to be seen occasionally in those or adjacent parishes.

Moving adult females with newborn cubs is a new concept that generally influences the female to remain where she has been relocated. Bears have a remarkable homing instinct and will generally attempt to return to their original home range. But with new cubs that are unable to travel very fast or far, the females will usually stay in the general area where they were relocated.

Even without these relocation efforts, bears are expanding their range in areas where core populations have existed for many years. More sightings are reported in Terrebonne and Vermillion Parishes as bears move out of St. Mary and Iberia. Bears are now sighted regularly in almost all of the parishes in northeast Louisiana where there is forested habitat.

The sighting of a bear while deer hunting can be a very rewarding outdoor experience. While frightening to many, bears are not considered dangerous and generally run at the sight of a human. Generally, making any loud noise will scare them away.

Bears are often attracted to feeders and bait set out to attract deer. They can destroy expensive

feeders if that is what it takes to get the food. These problems can be avoided by either baiting with soybeans or rice bran, or by raising the feeder up where the bear cannot reach it.

Bears are protected by both state and federal regulations. The recovery effort for the Louisiana black bear is considered by many to be the most progressive endangered species recovery program in the nation. It is very landowner friendly and works to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the recovery effort.

Please report bear sightings to your nearest LDWF Regional Office



Paul Davidson with 2 cubs during a relocation

Deer Management Meetings of Interest

July 11-13 2003 QDMA National Convention
Lafayette, LA
Call 800-209-3337 for Details

August 2 1st Annual Ark-La-Miss Wildlife
Management Symposium on
White-tailed Deer
Louisiana Tech, Ruston, LA
Call 318-257-4020 for Details

September 6 “Hands on Approach to Quality
Deer Management”
Idlewild Research Station
Clinton, LA
Call 225-578-2374 for Details



**Thomas Sartor, Guill Plantation DMAP, Richland Parish,
2001-02**



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The DMAP Newsletter is printed twice a year to assist DMAP Cooperators with the intensive management of deer and habitat resources and to enhance the recreational enjoyment derived from these resources. It also updates cooperators with information on the administration of the program. **DMAP contact people**

that receive the newsletter directly are encouraged to pass it to as many of their members as possible. Please forward any questions or comments about DMAP or the DMAP Newsletter to:

Larry Savage, DMAP Coordinator
David Moreland, Deer Research Leader
P.O. Box 98000
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moreland_dw@wlf.state.la.us or (225)765-2344

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